

## **Statement of Senator David Vitter**

“The Impacts of Federal Policies on Energy Production and Economic Growth in the Gulf.”

House Committee on Natural Resources

Tuesday, September 15, 9:00 AM

Louisiana Supreme Court, 400 Royal Street, New Orleans, Louisiana.

- Thank you Chairman Bishop and members of this Committee for holding this important hearing on “The Impacts of Federal Policies on Energy Production and Economic Growth in the Gulf”.
- It has been nearly five and a half years since the Deepwater Horizon explosion and subsequent oil spill, which killed eleven men who worked on the rig. Their names were:
  - Jason Anderson, 35, Midfield, Texas
  - Aaron Dale “Bubba” Burkeen – 37, Philadelphia, Mississippi
  - Donald Clark – 49, Newelton, Louisiana
  - Stephen Ray Curtis – 40, Georgetown, Louisiana
  - Gordon Jones – 28, Baton Rouge, Louisiana
  - Roy Wyatt Kemp – 27, Jonesville, Louisiana
  - Karl Dale Kleppinger, Jr. – 38, Natchez, Mississippi
  - Keith Blair Manuel – 56, Gonzales, Louisiana
  - Dewey Revette – 48, State Line, Mississippi
  - Shane Roshto – 22, Liberty, Mississippi and
  - Adam Weise (pronounced WEESE) – 24, Yorktown, Texas

- The leak went on for about three months, dumping more than 200 million gallons of crude oil into the Gulf and resulting in untold billions of dollars in economic damages. Our economy and environment are still recovering from it today.
- Worse than the spill itself, however, was the way in which the Administration reacted to it by imposing a six month drilling moratorium and, after that, a de-facto moratorium that had devastating economic impacts throughout Louisiana and the Gulf Coast.
- Despite the tragic events of five and a half years ago, offshore oil and gas development has played a huge role in our economy for decades and has operated extremely well alongside other critical offshore and coastal industries like fishing and tourism. For example, in 2013 there were nearly 130,000 direct and indirect jobs in Louisiana supported by the offshore energy industry. At the same time, our state set an all-time record for tourism, attracting 27.3 million visitors who spent \$10.8 billion and contributed \$800

million in state tax revenues. On top of all that, one third of the fish caught in the lower 48 are landed right here in Louisiana.

- While the recent energy boom in the United States has helped Louisiana recover from President Obama's disastrous drilling moratorium and de-facto moratorium, I am deeply concerned about a regulatory avalanche coming from the Obama Administration, aimed towards oil and gas.
- This committee is familiar with the Department of Interior's proposed well-control rule. After Deepwater Horizon, a number of changes were made by industry and the federal government to improve offshore safety, and much progress has been made in ensuring that such a disaster never happens again.
- But what has been conveyed to me about this well control proposal is that it will have substantial economic impacts throughout the offshore oil and gas supply chain and could lead to another offshore drilling moratorium. That would obviously be crippling to Louisiana and its economy.

- But there are also threats to industry onshore, such as the recently-proposed methane rules for upstream oil and gas operations, and the pending proposal to reduce the standard for ground level ozone, both of which are EPA regulations.
- These proposals, and several others that this and other committees have looked at, are going to impose substantial economic burdens on the oil and gas industry, which has been one of the few bright spots in the Obama economy. A healthy oil and gas industry – both onshore and offshore – is critical to having a vibrant economy in Louisiana and throughout the Gulf Coast.
- Mr. Chairman, I want to thank you for inviting me to testify today.